

The Problem of Insurgency

Synopsis: The graph of insurgency and organized violence is on increase in India. The poor and backward states are the worst victims of it. The fatalities, ethnic extremist groups, seas etc. have let lose a reign of terror in many parts of the country. The private mercenary armies in Bihar have created a virtual chaos. In many violent cases there has been police and insurgent nexus. Appalling poverty and illiteracy are the two major causes that give rise to insurgency. In north-eastern states the situation is becoming worse day by day. Insurgency has become a cottage industry in these parts of the country. Some quick and effective socio-economic measures, poverty alleviation, removal of illiteracy are the needs of the hour.

The graph of organized crimes and violence shows rapid upward trend. Left activists, Exalts, ethnic groups, mafias and various types of Seas have become quite active in various parts of the country of late. In the backward and least developed States like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura etc. the organized violence and killings are on the increase. The more backward and poorer the region, the greater the insurgent activities. In the poor rural areas of Andhra Pradesh, the Naxalite violence has increased sharply in the recent years. Thousands of men, women and children become victims of senseless violence and organized killings every year. During 1996 there were more than 201 deaths in Assam alone because of the violence and insurgency unleashed there by the Bodo Security Force now renamed at National Democratic Front of Bodoland. This was 256 per cent higher than the number of deaths caused by ULFA in 1995. In May-June 1996 there were 200 deaths in violent clashes between Bodos and Santhals in the district of Kokrajhar and Bongaingaon and more than one lakh people were displaced.

Bihar is the worst as far as violence, killings and terrorism, in an organized way, is concerned. Exalts of various shades and Seas—the private mercenary armies have let loose an era of terror there. And the State Government is looking on helplessly. The police and security system seem to have failed completely. The political leaders and parties lack the required will to tackle the menace. Violence and killings have become an industry in Bihar. The police politician-criminal nexus in Bihar is an open secret. Bihar has earned the dubious distinction of being the most violent and corrupt State. It is estimated that over 16 persons are killed there every hour in such crimes and violence. Killings, kidnapping, loot and violence have become the order of the day. 2, 420 cases of kidnapping and 340 cases of kidnapping for ransom were registered with the state police in 1996. The banned outfits are richly armed with

modern sophisticated weapons. The private armies and Seas have a huge quantity of licensed and unlicensed arms and ammunition. The trigger-happy anti-social elements are having a roaring success and business. There has been sudden spurt in dacoities and incidents of train robberies. And the common man is the worst affected.

Most of the killings and violence in Bihar are planned and organized. For example on April 11, 1997 the massacre at Ekwari village was a result of a pre-planned and organized conspiracy of the Ranveer Sena. Its execution was helped by the police personnel who were then stationed there in the village in two camps. This incident highlights the fact of police-Sena nexus. There have been many more such massacres before as well. The mance underlines the urgency of some short and long term effective strategy. The problem demands a well coordinated action comprising rapid improvement in roads, communication and implementation of land reforms besides strict enforcement of law. Special developmental and employment projects need to be taken immediately to tackle with the rapidly deteriorating law and order situation. Poverty alleviation, elementary education, employment and welfare schemes should be given the highest priority.

Poverty-stricken and undeveloped rural regions of the country are virtual breeding grounds for such organized violence, killings, crimes and insurgency. Those militant outfits succeed to win the sympathy and support of the unemployed youth, suppressed and weak sections of the society and labourers and marginal farmers who have always been at the receiving end at the hands of the administration, law and justice, landlords and money lenders. For example, the Peoples War Group (PWP) in Andhra Pradesh has been quite successful in its aim of liberating a part of the State from the so-called bourgeoisie rule with the popular support of the rural public. Large tracts of the Telengana are now under PWG's effective rule and administration and the government has to say. The outfit receives taxes and levies from the people. It has also taken up developmental activities with the active participation and consultation with the people. Behind this dramatic success of PWG lies people's popular support and sympathy.

Banning of extremist outfits and insurgent groups does not provide the remedy as we have seen in many cases. In our north-eastern States the situation is fast deteriorating in spite of many administrative decisions and actions to check the violence. With the strict law enforcement, special development schemes to alleviate poverty and suffering of the people should also be taken. It is this double pronged strategy that can work wonders. For example, Tripura has been on the boil and tribal versus non-tribal conflict has achieved new heights and proportions because of half-hearted decisions and

wrong policies of the government. The All Tripura Force (ATTF) and other extreme outfits have constantly been demanding deportation of all foreigners from the State. If one group surrenders there, then another takes its place with more vigour and vengeance. It seems insurgency has become a cottage industry in the province. And the political parties are busy exploiting the situation for their petty party ends.

Firm and strict enforcement of laws coupled with meaningful and timely socio-economic measures is the only remedy. On his recent visit to the six north-eastern State Prime Minister I.K Gujral promised to implement his predecessor H.D Deve Gowda's Rs.6,100/- crore economic package. He has also promised some other socio-economic measures including the reconstitution of the North-Eastern Council (NEC) and setting up a central university in Mizoram and unconditional talks with insurgent groups.

Undoubtedly, there cannot be any peace without proper employment opportunities, food, shelter, clothing and economic development of the region. The economic schemes so far implemented have been quite inadequate and so have failed miserably to fulfil the expectations of the local people. The corruption in administration has been widespread and people are a frustrated lot. The great portion of vast funds allotted for various schemes has reached the pockets of the bureaucrats, contractors and the middlemen. The entire population of these States suffers from a deep sense of neglect, frustration and exploitation. The desperately need a healing touch besides economical package.